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THE FIGHT TO COMMUNIZE SPAIN

By Felix Morley

"The Spanish ulcer killed me", said Napoleon in one of his moments of reminiscence at St. Helena. Now another, not dissimilar, Spanish ulcer threatens Stalin's heretofore increasingly successful efforts to dominate and communize Europe.

By the "Spanish ulcer" Napoleon meant simply the proud and deeply-religious conservatism of that ancient land. In 1808, despite the blunders and corruption of their rulers, these Spanish people rose to expel the French in what Herbert Fisher, the great English historian, has called "the first example of a long series of popular and national movements which ultimately shattered the Napoleonic Empire".

Today, the same dignity, the same poise, the same ingrained conservatism, have made of Spain a greater Rock of Gibraltar against which all the Communist machinations have broken in vain. The scheming of Moscow to overthrow Franco's unsavory rule by a planted revolution has been as Machiavellian, and almost as successful, as the steps whereby Napoleon contrived the downfall of the equally shameful Spanish monarchy in 1807. Then, as now, it was intelligent English diplomacy which operated to foil the plot. The chief difference in the historical parallel is that the Government of the United States, which preserved neutrality toward Napoleon's attack on Spain, has done much to assist Stalin's effort to absorb that nation.

At the eleventh hour, however, we have switched support from our Russian to our British ally, with the result that the red tide in Russia may now, if we continue firm, begin to recede. But it was a near thing, and the efficacy, if not the very existence, of the United Nations Organization may prove to be the price of Stalin's loss of face.

II

Just ten years ago, on July 17, 1936, General Franco raised the standard of revolt against the Leftist Republican regime then in power at Madrid. Since then, so much water has gone down the Potomac that many Americans have forgotten the "plague on both your houses" attitude with which this ugly European complication was at first received in the

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United States. Balance is restored by recalling the objective judgment of the 1937 annual of the Council on Foreign Relations, entitled "The United States in World Affairs". Said this authoritative study:

> "The conflict in Spain purported to be a civil war, and logically, therefore, the only correct course of conduct was for the rest of the world not to intervene. . . . Unfortunately, however, neither Soviet Russia, nor Italy, nor the German Reich regarded the internal war in Spain as a local matter. Soviet Russia saw a promising new extension of Communism threatened by General Franco's insurrection, Hitler correspondingly found in him an ally, and Mussolini . . . discovered in the situation . . . a chance to increase the prestige of Italy and her dominion over the Middle Sea."

Existing neutrality legislation, at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, applied only to wars "between or among" foreign States. Nevertheless, the Department of State, on August 7, 1936, made public its emergency instructions to all our consular and diplomatic representatives in Spain, which read in part:

> ". . . in conformity with its well-established policy of non-interference with internal affairs in other countries . . . this government will, of course, scrupulously refrain from any interference whatsoever in the unfortunate Spanish situation."

That this conformed with American public opinion was made abundantly clear as soon as the newly-elected Congress met, on January 5, 1937. The very next day it adopted a joint resolution, passed unanimously by the Senate and signed with alacrity by President Roosevelt, forbidding the export of arms, ammunition and implements of war "for the use of either of the opposing forces in Spain".

Aggravated by continuous Nazi, Fascist and Communist intervention, the Spanish Civil War spread devastation until Franco's military victory, early in 1939. His Government was recognized as the de jure government of Spain by France and Great Britain on February 27, 1939, and by the Roosevelt Administration a few weeks later. Since then, both the United States and Great Britain have maintained this recognition.

III

The Kremlin has a longer memory than the American public. The latter was, and for the most part probably still is, allergic to the triumph of either Leftist or Rightest totalitarianism in Spain. But Moscow, smarting under the liquidation of Spanish Communism, has seemingly made the establishment of a Red Iberia (first Spain, then Portugal) a major objective of its post-war policy.

In this wholly understandable effort -- a Spanish Soviet Republic would mean the permanent communization of Western Europe -- Stalin has

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utilized many innocent Americans as his dupes. While some have seen the picture dispassionately, few have dared publicly to discount the picture of "Fascist Franco" which is so easy to portray. An honorable exception is Alexander Weddell, experienced career diplomat who served as Ambassador to Spain from 1939 to 1942. In a speech in Richmond, on June 25, Mr. Weddell called Franco's Government "bad", but said that if the United Nations overthrows him:

> ". . . it will plunge innocent people into another ferocious civil war and make the country a breeding ground for Communistic ideology."

Lacking access to diplomatic archives, it cannot be charged with assurance that Stalin joined the United Nations Organization partly to use it as a lever to establish a Communist Spain. But surface indication points toward that conclusion. Although there is no scintilla of evidence to show that the Franco Government is at the moment a threat to world peace, the Kremlin has cleverly engineered a policy of having this vulnerable regime perpetually attacked, and if possible diplomatically ostracized and overthrown, through the agency of UN. In this subtle procedure the puppet government of Poland has been utilized as Russia's stooge, drawing from Winston Churchill the caustic observation:

> ". . . there is as much freedom in Spain under the Franco regime and a good deal more security and happiness for ordinary folk, than there is in Poland at this time."

While the British, with their better understanding of European problems, were from the outset alert to the overtones of Stalin's anti-Franco drive, our official contribution during several critical months was to play the Communist game. Thus the Department of State, on March 4 of this year, released to the press a most tendentious selection of documents carefully culled to prove Franco's wartime subserviency to the Axis. Russia promptly cited these in support of the resolution demanding collective intervention in Spain, which the Polish delegate introduced in the Security Council on April 17.

It may be noted that the Department of State, in "screening" the Spanish documents so as to inflame American public opinion against Franco, let one of contrary purport slip through the mesh. This was a minuted conversation, dated December 15, 1943, in which the German Ambassador to Spain criticized Franco for being too pro-Ally and told him that this was "a very dangerous policy for Spain". Few, if any, American newspapers, however, picked out that part of this single document.

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It was less than two months ago, after bumbling diplomacy had stumbled to the very edge of the abyss, that wise counsels in the Department of State forced a change from the previously pronounced subservience to Stalin's policy. And it is no mere coincidence that Russian venom against the United States, now made clear in one form or another almost daily, began to be officially sponsored with this change in our attitude. A Communist Spain is very important to Russia's long-range plans, and for the United States to have blocked this on the verge of achievement is, in the eyes of Moscow, an unforgivable offense.

Nevertheless, the Russian policy has been blocked, and largely by American action in the Security Council of UN. First of all, we joined in a refusal to pass the Polish Resolution, calling for immediate intervention in Spain. Instead, we backed the appointment of a subcommittee which was unable to define Franco as a threat to world peace; which found no evidence of atomic research in Spain; and which recommended passing the buck on the whole issue to the next meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, scheduled for September 3.

It was at this point that Russian irritation became suspiciously intense, culminating in the disgraceful Security Council session of June 26, ironically enough the first anniversary of the adoption of the San Francisco Charter. At this session, Delegate Gromyko invoked the veto power no less than three times, drawing from Australian Delegate Evatt the remark that clearly: "The veto will be exercised . . . until the only proposal left is the proposal that Mr. Gromyko supports."

That, however, is not quite the case. The Russians seemingly have cut off their nose to spite their face. Gromyko's wanton use of the veto has certainly proved that the United Nations is of dubious efficiency as compared with the discarded League of Nations. But it has also prevented, by Russia's own action, any formal international condemnation of Franco which might have positive effect in unseating him. The whole episode, unfortunately, would seem to have strengthened this dictator's position.

It is not the Communist custom to regard no bread as better than half a loaf. So the question of why this negative attitude was finally chosen in respect to Franco is mysterious -- unless Russian plans call for an upheaval in Spain prior to the September date to which the majority of the Council sought to defer the issue as a compromise measure.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. III, NO. 27

By Frank C. Hanighen July 3, 1946

"It was a scramble to avoid picking up the check", remarked one member of Congress, as the President vetoed the OPA measure. Neither the Executive nor the Legislative branch of the Government wanted to pay the rather large bill of unpopularity resulting from OPA and/or its disappearance. Congress felt that the Executive should at least share the political liability of the admittedly defective OPA proposal and that Truman should sign the bill. The President preferred to gamble on the people blaming Congress for the complete elimination of OPA, and therefore he vetoed the bill. It remains to be seen who will win politically in what is less an effort to fight inflation than a contest to see who will bear the onus for such popular resentment as arises from higher prices.

From the standpoint of an objective economist (not a $6500 a year employee of Bowles) the game of "holding the line" against inflationary tendencies was lost in the first inning last fall when profits and wages were de-controlled. Thereafter, given the various group pressures on Executive and Legislature, it was a losing game. The feeling that OPA was only temporary vitiated efforts to do a really scientific job of "holding the line", or rather "relaxing it gradually".

From the standpoint of principle, the Congress really comes off better than the President. The former probably expressed pretty accurately the attitude of the majority of the people. Of course, pressure groups had been at work and members of Congress were not innocent of political calculations. But the OPA bill sent to the President was a compromise measure, representing at once the urge to get rid of all controls and at the same time the natural prudence of those who wanted to cushion the shock of rising prices. No one can now say with certainty that it would not have worked.

The veto message of the President was hardly honest. If he wished to prevent the uncontrolled inflation which he predicted, then he should have signed the bill. At least it provided the framework for some means of checking prices. By vetoing it, he well knew that he was killing OPA altogether and that by Monday morning there would be absolutely no rein on prices. As a former Senator, he knew the practical realities of the parliamentary procedure would be such that Congress could not enact his proposed substitute bill in time to save OPA from expiring.

As to the chances of winning popular approval, observers believe that the President's move has a good chance, on a short term basis, of reacting in his favor and against Congress. But it was noticeable that some Democratic wheel horses on the Hill were worried. "He may win some applause tomorrow, next week, maybe even next month", they said. "But the danger is that in the long run whatever discontent there is about rising prices will turn against the man in the driver's seat. It will be the President who will eventually have to bear the responsibiity."

This view conflicts with some hysterical utterances of commentators right after the President's veto was announced. One shrilly cried, "It was Roosevelt himself, the old political master, come to life again". But a wag retorted, "It wasn't Roosevelt, but Rosenman returning to the White House to help write the speech".

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Under Secretary of State Acheson served bitter tea to General van der Becke during his recent visit here, but the War Department made the Argentine emissary comparatively happy. He found that the Pentagon's plan for inter-American defense is not radically different from what the Argentine Government wants. For the United States Army believes that, subsidiary to an over-all hemispheric staff, there should be three centers of power in the defense setup: Canada, United States and Argentina

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-- with the latter responsible for defense of the southern continent. This news has reached Rio de Janeiro. The Brazilian Government, which does not consider itself second to Argentina in military importance, is very indignant, and the Rio press has reacted strongly.

One of the reasons for the attitude of the U. S. Army is the fact that the Brazilian division in Italy during the war made a poor impression on U. S. military observers. It is true that Brazil has a population of 42 million and Argentina only 13 million. But the U. S. Army believes that Argentina's racial stocks are hardier and better warrior material and this factor outweighs the difference in populations.

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Official Russian disclosures of purges in industry and shift of populations which had proved disloyal during the war in no way indicate that a conspiracy has been at work to overthrow the Soviet Government. Students of Russian affairs say that in the purges of ten years ago, the authorities struck wildly and almost haphazardly at bureaucrats and engineers, in order to make a show of punishment rather than to weed out the culprits efficiently and thoroughly. This same pattern, according to these observers, is evident in the present measure.

The dismissals of plant managers and other important bureaucrats on the grounds of inefficiency, "cooking statistics" and failure to make production goals offers strong confirmation of the lag in production reported in this column on June 19. It is believed that one cause of this slump lies in the fact that American (and other foreign) engineers and materials have not been sent to Russia since the close of the war. In the Thirties, it was this outside assistance which in large part enabled Russia to make industrial advances.

There is also an opinion that the present purges were inspired by the disparity between reconstruction gains, as claimed by the Moscow propaganda, and pessimistic reports in the foreign press. The latter got back to the intelligentsia and governing class, it is thought, and the Government presumably staged the purges to diminish criticism both at home and abroad.

As for transference of large numbers of Tartars from the Crimean and Chichen Ingush Republics to other areas, by way of punishment for treachery and collaborationism during the German invasion, this is interesting as an official confirmation of facts long denied or ignored by fellow travellers. The movement led by General A. A. Vlassov, a Communist Red Army corps commander who deserted to the Germans, was of no little assistance to the Axis from 1942 to 1945. The Vlassov story, reported in HUMAN EVENTS in May, 1944, was generally hushed up in the British and American press. It is of no little pertinence that while major totalitarian powers -- Russia, Germany and Italy -- suffered from disloyal military and political movements during the war, there were no corresponding developments in the democratic countries of Britain and the United States.

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Some say that Mr. Walter Lippman seems to be carrying water on both shoulders in his recent columns. But Alice Longworth prefers to call it "Operation Crosseyed".

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Marianne smiles again ---- After weeks of inter-party wrangling, M. Bidault has formed a government under his leadership. He has ventured to mount the throne of the Presidency which proved so treacherous to the Socialist leader, M. Gouin, last winter and spring. But he apparently calculates that now that summer has come,

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the food and general economic conditions will offer him a breathing spell from too many domestic woes. Meanwhile he is in a position to bring to a successful conclusion the framing of a "republican", "progressive", but nevertheless "traditional" Constitution, with the checks and balances which the majority of the electorate seem to want.

He has effected a compromise in the wage dispute, which the Communists clearly hoped to exploit against him. Public opinion was strongly on his side, and the Communists had to yield. That somewhat chastened Party has accepted seven seats in the Cabinet. Among these ministries are those of Health, Labor, Reconstruction and War Veterans -- all posts likely to draw much criticism and make their occupants unpopular. Bidault's MRP (Mouvement Républicain Populaire) has nine Cabinet portfolios, the Socialist Party, five.

The most puzzling question is the future of the Socialist Party. Some observers wonder if the Party's Right Wing will become independent of, or split from, the main body. There have been schisms before in the Socialist Party. The Right Wing has a strong figure in A. Le Trocquer, Minister of the Interior (Police) in the late Gouin Government. He is outspokenly anti-Communist. Since the Right Wing is not orthodox Marxist and is perennially suspicious of Moscow, it may find much in common with the MRP. This particular situation deserves watching.

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More than five million prisoners of war of former enemy countries are still held in captivity, many of them as outright slave laborers, according to the London Observer (June 2). "It has been a fundamental conviction of the civilized world that all prisoners of war have rights and that they should be protected by an impartial international body, above local prejudice and standard of conduct. If that were necessary during the war, it is more so now that the prisoners have no Government of their own", the Observer said.

This newspaper points out that the International Red Cross in Geneva, which has done so much for Allied prisoners during the war, is still in theory charged with looking after ex-enemy prisoners, but is greatly hampered by lack of funds. Only the generosity of the Swiss Government has enabled it so far to carry on at all. The Observer suggests that the British, American and other Allied Governments should make regular contributions to the International Red Cross as long as Allied nations hold enemy nationals as prisoners of war.

Informed American sources add a disturbing chapter to this story. They say that in the days immediately preceding the collapse of their countries, the Governments of Germany and Japan, following the custom usual in such crises, transferred large funds to the International Red Cross for the care of their prisoners. The sums involved are said to total approximately five million dollars.

The transfer of these funds to the International Red Cross, however, was immediately blocked by the American State Department. Although the War Department is said to have no objection, the State Department continues to refuse to allow the International Red Cross to take possession of this money. The same sources point out that France, just before its collapse in 1940, transferred a similar amount to the International Red Cross and that the Nazis, then masters of most of Europe, did not prevent the transfer.

The State Department has therefore put the United States Government in the position of having first secretly approved, at Yalta, the use of slave labor as reparations, and then of denying these slave laborers that minimum of protection which even Hitler was willing to grant his French captives in the hour of his triumph.

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Notes and Quotes

In the new London review Polemic, George Orwell contributes a thoughtful article, "The Prevention of Literature", of which the following is a sample: "The organized lying practiced by totalitarian states is not, as is sometimes claimed, a temporary expedient of the same nature as military deception. It is something integral to totalitarianism, something that would still continue even if concentration camps and secret police forces had ceased to be necessary. Among intelligent Communists there is an underground legend to the effect that although the Russian government is obliged now to deal in lying propaganda, frame-up trials, and so forth, it is secretly recording the true facts and will publish them at some future time. We can, I believe, be quite certain that this is not the case, because the mentality implied by such an action is that of a liberal historian who believes that the past cannot be altered and that a correct knowledge of history is valuable as a matter of course.

"From the totalitarian point of view history is something to be created rather than learned. A totalitarian state is in effect a theocracy, and its ruling caste, in order to keep its position, has to be thought of as infallible. But since, in practice, no one is infallible, it is frequently necessary to rearrange past events in order to show that this or that mistake was not made, or that this or that imaginary triumph actually happened. Then, again, every major change in policy demands a corresponding change of doctrine and a revaluation of prominent historical figures. This kind of thing happens everywhere, but is clearly likelier to lead to outright falsification in societies where only one opinion is permissible at any given moment. Totalitarianism demands, in fact, the continuous alteration of the past, and in the long run probably demands a disbelief in the very existence of objective truth."

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Are the British acting like Herrenvolk? The London Peace News (May 31) prints a letter from a soldier in the British zone of Germany which includes this passage: "The pathetic thing in this food situation is that the Army wastes so much good food and nothing is done about it, also too many individuals, both officers and rankers . . . have neither any sympathy or interest and are often openly mean and hostile. I personally have to put up with many insults, grumbling and hostility every time I take food off the table, food that was left on plates uneaten by others. Some are so mean as to stick cigarette butts, matches or cigarette ashes into the remains on their plates, purposely so that the Germans would not get the discarded scraps.

"I saw the following scene: A slightly drunk soldier pulled out a package of cigarettes, lighted one, took a few puffs and threw it on the ground. A German dived for it. The soldier dashed at him, struck him on the head with his fist and crushed the cigarette with his boot. Then lighted another cigarette, took two puffs, threw it again and waited for another victim. Similar signs of petty individual sadism against Germans could be given by the thousands. You see it every day on the street, nobody can interfere, nobody can do anything about it."

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Henry Beston in his refreshing "Country Chronicle" column in the Progressive (June 10) offers this reminder: "Under today's disorders there is something at work among the nations whose great importance has not yet been adequately realized -- the need of men for a community to live in and live with. The hope is vague, unsaid, and unformulated, but the need is great, and there is something in our hearts which troubles us that we have lost what was once so beautifully called 'the commonweal'.

"I suspect that if this open wound is to heal, it will have to heal like all wounds from the bottom, and that we shall have to begin at the beginning with the family and its obligations, with the village and its responsibilities, and with our universal and neglected duty to the earth."

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